

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 COA-02 DLOS-07 IO-14 DRC-01 ACDA-19

COME-00 /149 W

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R 161225Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6409

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1128

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR TD VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELA ARRESTS TRINIDADIAN FISHERMEN

REF: POS-0756 D/D JUNE 27, 1973

1. PORT OF SPAIN NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN COVERING THE ARREST, JAILING AND ALLEGED BEATING OF SIX TRINIDAD FISHERMEN BY VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES ON MAY 3. THE TRINIDAD GUARDIAN, THE MAJOR PORT OF SPAIN MORNING DAILY, HEADLINED ON MAY 15 THAT THE FISHING ISSUE STRAINS THE TIES WITH CARACAS. IT QUOTED FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE VENEZUELAN DAILY "EL UNIVERSAL" OF APRIL 22. ACCORDING TO THE POS PAPER, PRESIDENT PEREZ, IN AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN SPEECH MADE AUGUST 2, 1973, DENOUNCED AN INTERIM AGREEMENT REACHED JULY 1973 AND EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT IT SHOULD BE RE-NEGOTIATED TO PROTECT CONSERVATION AND VENEZUELAN NATIONAL INTERESTS.

2. APPARENTLY SOME 300 FISHING PERMITS HAD BEEN ISSUED TO T&T FISHERMEN LAST YEAR AND 24 TO VENEZUELAN UNDER THE INTERIM AGREEMENT. THE PERMITS EXPIRED IN DECEMBER BUT WERE EXTENDED UNTIL MARCH BY MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN RENEWED AND THE PAPER BELIEVES THAT THE NON-RENEWAL IS IN LINE WITH

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PRESIDENT PEREZ' STANCE AGAINST TRINIDADIAN FISHERMEN.

3. COMMENT: THE FISHING ISSUE IS OF GREAT LOCAL INTEREST IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO AS NOT ONLY DO MANY SMALL SCALE FISHERMEN EARN THEIR LIVELIHOOD FROM FISHING THE WATERS IN QUESTION BETWEEN THE SOUTHERN TIP OF TRINIDAD AND VENEZUELA BUT OTHER VILLAGERS ALONG THE NORTH COAST OF TRINIDAD AND THE COAST OF TOBAGO HAVE CLAIMED THAT VENEZUELAN FISHERMEN HAVE SWEEPED UP MUCH OF THE CATCH IN IN-SHORE WATERS OVER THE YEARS AND DEPLETED THE FISHING GROUNDS THAT THEY RELIED ON FOR SUBSISTENCE FISHING.

THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THE GOTT IS EXPERIENCING IN ARRIVING AT AN AGREEMENT OVER FISHING RIGHTS WITH VENEZUELA MAY CONTRIBUTE TO A RECONSIDERATION OF ITS POSITION OF RELIANCE ON BILATERAL AGREEMENT FOR ITS RIGHTS TO FISHING GROUNDS OFF THE SOUTH AMERICAN COAST.
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Message Attributes

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